

SECTION M -- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2010 COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACT EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

M.1 BASIS FOR AWARD

The Census Bureau's source evaluation will be based on best-value principles. Accordingly, award will be made to the responsible and technically acceptable Offeror whose proposal provides the greatest overall value to the Government, price and other factors considered. This best-value determination will be accomplished by comparing the value of the differences in the technical factors for competing offers, based on their strengths, weaknesses, and risks, with differences in their price to the Government. In making this comparison, the Government is more concerned with obtaining superior technical, and management capabilities than with making an award at the lowest overall price to the Government. However, the Government will not make an award at a significantly higher overall price to achieve slightly superior technical skills. The Offeror is advised that evaluation factors other than price are significantly more important than price.

M.2 EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

- (a) Evaluation of all offers will be made in accordance with the criteria outlined in this section. The proposals will be evaluated against the following six (6) factors:

Factor 1	Similar Experience
Factor 2	Past Performance
Factor 3	Key Personnel
Factor 4	Technical Approach
Factor 5	Management & Small Business Subcontracting Approaches
Factor 6	Price

Factors 1 through 5 are referred to as the Technical Factors. Factor 6 is a Price Factor that will be evaluated separately and applied in the determination of best value.

The rated technical evaluation criteria are significantly more important than price. As relative technical advantages and disadvantages become less distinct, differences in price between proposals are of increased importance in determining the most advantageous proposal. Conversely, as differences in price become less distinct, differences in relative technical advantages and disadvantages between proposals are of increased importance to the determination.

- (b) The technical evaluation will be attained through a determination and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and risks of each proposal. Technical risks will be included in the final evaluation of each factor and will not be evaluated as a separate factor. In the assessment of technical risk, the Government evaluators will consider all available information.

- (c) The results of the technical evaluation and the computed price of each proposal will be provided to the Source Selection Official (SSO) to support the award decision.

M.3 TECHNICAL EVALUATION

M.3.1 Relative Order of Importance of Technical Factors

Similar Experience, Past Performance, Key Personnel, Technical Approach, and Management & Small Business Subcontracting Approaches make up the technical evaluation factors. The five factors are considered to have equal importance.

The technical evaluation will be attained through a determination and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and risks of each proposal. Technical risks will be included in the final evaluation of each factor and will not be evaluated as a separate factor. In the assessment of technical risk, the Government evaluators will consider all available information.

M.3.2 Similar Experience (What similar contracts has the Contractor performed)

Similar experience will be evaluated on the basis of the Offeror's relevant experience during the last five (5) years working in other communications campaign(s) similar in size, scope and complexity to the 2010 Census Communications Campaign. Relevancy is indicated by demographic and geographical coverage; targeted audience(s); level of management and integration required; campaign goals; amount of tasks required; budget; preliminary market research conducted; resources deployed; communication mix employed (e.g. advertising, public relations, special events); variety of media (e.g. print, radio, TV, Internet, emerging media); total cost of media buys; and nature of messages (e.g. public awareness, change in attitude). The Government will determine if the Offeror's experience is similar in size, scope, and complexity to the 2010 Census Communications Campaign, as described in Section C.

The information presented in the Offeror's written proposals and oral presentations, together with information from any other sources available to the Government, will provide the primary input for evaluation of this factor. The Government reserves the right to verify the specifics of prior contracts described by Offeror in the proposals.

If the Offeror has no single contract experience that encompasses all types of experience defined below, the Offeror may show relevant experience through a combination of projects which together show that work has been accomplished which is consistent in scope and complexity with the 2010 Census integrated communications campaign.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's Similar Experience are:

- Experience in developing and implementing extensive, complex integrated communications campaigns similar in size and scope to the 2010 Census Communications Campaign requirements, as described in Section C;
- Experience promoting participation, leading and integrating services from multiple sub-contractors, principally small businesses;
- Experience integrating multiple elements of the communications mix, including but not limited to advertising, marketing, public relations, and special events, ensuring (and reporting on) quality through the whole process;
- Experience in reaching broad and diverse audiences (both demographically and geographically) at the national level, inclusive of minority and ethnic populations, using multiple languages;
- Experience in developing, implementing, conducting, analyzing market research and applying its results for efforts similar to the 2010 Census communications campaign, with special interest in the quantity and quality of research on hard-to-reach, hard-to-motivate populations, and the insights and recommendations resulting from such research.
- Experience using communications technology, new media venues and emerging marketing trends in large communications campaigns;
- Experience and resources to buy national and local media, ensuring cost savings for clients;
- Experience projecting and recognizing potential problems and implementing corrective measures in a short period of time
- Experience working with Government in communications campaigns.

Note: If the experience(s) described by the Offeror as part of its proposal required subcontracting or other external resource usage, these relationships must be clearly explained. The Offeror should be sure to reference experience instructions as they relate to Key Personnel in Section L.

M.3.3 Past Performance (How well has the Contractor performed in the past)

Evaluation of past performance will allow the Government to determine whether the Offeror consistently delivers quality services in a timely manner. Past performance information will be obtained for contracts performed by the Offeror during the last five (5) years consistent in scope and complexity with the project. Past performance information will be obtained from references on contracts described in the Offeror's proposal. Past performance on other relevant contracts may also be obtained at the discretion of the Government. In addition to information obtained from references, the Government may use other sources of information to assess past performance, such as Government past performance databases, Inspector General reports, General Accounting Office reports, and information in the media concerning the Offeror.

The information obtained from references on contracts described in the Offeror's proposal, together with information from any other sources available to the Government, will provide the primary input for evaluation of this factor. The Government reserves the right to verify the specifics of prior contracts described by the Offeror in its proposal.

Past performance on contracts that are more technically relevant to this requirement and similar in scope will be considered more heavily than performance on contracts that are less relevant and of smaller scope.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's Past Performance are:

- Quality and outcome of previous communications campaigns performed by the Offeror and their ability to reach or surpass campaign goals;
- Offeror's capability and effectiveness in integrating several communications tactics in a national campaign;
- Offeror's aptitude and effectiveness in working with, managing and integrating the work of several sub-contractors, ensuring message consistency and brand cohesiveness across all materials developed;
- Offeror's success in reaching diverse audiences, including numerous race and ethnic groups, and to develop messages in diverse languages;
- Offeror's ability to control costs, manage contract activities and meet schedules in providing services and products;
- Offeror's effectiveness in adhering to or exceeding subcontracting plans and goals;
- Offeror's capability and effectiveness in conducting market research efforts; and
- Quality and effectiveness of creative material produced by the Offeror, media buys and ad placements.

Additionally, evaluation of past performance may include Offeror's records of providing high-quality services in a timely manner; adhering to contract schedules; administrative aspects of contract performance; overall quality of assigned personnel; availability, stability, reasonable and cooperative behavior; commitment to and business-like concern for the interests of the customer; quality of overall program management approach; cost savings achieved; record of awards or performance recognition earned, and overall client satisfaction.

If an Offeror lacks a record of relevant past performance, it will receive a neutral past performance evaluation.

M.3.4 Key Personnel

Key personnel will be evaluated through information contained in the written proposal and oral presentations. Specifically, the Government desires a mix of Key Personnel with relevant experience in the development, integration and implementation of a national communications campaign, including reaching minorities, and numerous tactics and logistical considerations. A strong management team will include available personnel with combined expertise in all aspects of the 2010 Census Communications Campaign technical requirements, business management, and program management.

The information presented in the Offeror's proposals and oral presentation, together with information from any other sources available to the Government, will provide the primary input

for evaluation of this factor. The Government reserves the right to verify the specifics of prior contracts described by Offeror in its proposal.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's Key Personnel are:

- Years of experience and appropriateness of the skill sets of each proposed personnel to successfully perform in this contract;
- Relevancy of the proposed personnel similar experiences to the requirements for this contract;
- Recognition in his/her field;
- Ability of the individual to remain on the program through the performance of the 2010 Census;
- Experience in developing campaigns targeted to reach minorities; and
- Experience of the proposed personnel in working together in previous campaigns or projects.

As a reference for skills which are applicable to this evaluation, the Offeror should review the 2010 Census Communications Web site, Reference Library, as well as all other posted material (Q&A, vendor conferences, etc.) available at:

<http://www.census.gov/procure/www/2010communications>.

The Government reserves the right to utilize other information available to it to evaluate key personnel. For example, the Government may query contract references and other end user representatives regarding the experience of proposed Key Personnel and the quality of their performance. Other sources of information concerning Key Personnel may include technical journals, Government past performance databases, Inspector General reports, General Accounting Office reports, and information in the media concerning key personnel.

M.3.5 Technical Approach

This evaluation factor is divided into three elements, as described below. Each element will be evaluated through written proposals and oral presentations. Each element is considered of equal importance in evaluating this factor.

M.3.5.1 – Element 1 - Overall Technical Approach

This element will be evaluated by an assessment of the likelihood that the Offeror's capabilities will enable them to meet Government requirements. The Government will also assess any risk(s) that could potentially lead to Offeror's poor performance and could jeopardize the success of the campaign.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's general technical approach are:

- Offeror's and Team's understanding of the size, scope, challenges and complexity of the 2010 Census and of the 2010 Census Communications Campaign contract requirements;
- Offeror's and Team's in-depth knowledge and understanding of all applicable marketing and communications techniques, including identification of future innovations within the industry, new technologies and cultural changes, and plans for minimizing, to the greatest extent practical, strategic and technical obsolescence due to early start of this contract;
- Comprehensiveness, adequacy and feasibility of the Offeror's approach to buying media (nationally and locally), and the advantages of these methodologies to the Government; Offeror's approach to developing, conducting and analyzing multiple and varied researches among multiple audiences; and Offeror's approach to reaching numerous and diverse audiences; and
- Offeror's creativity and innovation in their approach.

M.3.5.2 – Element 2 - Target Segment Exercise

For this element, emphasis will be given to the Offeror's approach when addressing and providing effective solutions to individual requirements of the 2010 Census Communications Campaign and how it ties up to the overall integrated campaign and to decennial operations.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's solution to the Target Segment Exercise are:

- Offeror's understanding of the scope and complexity of the exercise and how it relates to the decennial census;
- Offeror's adequacy in the allocation of resources to satisfy all requirements of the exercise;
- Comprehensiveness, adequacy and feasibility of the Offeror's proposed solution to the exercise; and
- Offeror's creativity and innovation in their approach.

M.3.5.3 – Element 3 - Task Order No. 1, Development of the National Communications Plan

For this element, emphasis will be given to the Offeror's technical approach to developing a comprehensive, national communications plan for the 2010 Census Communications Campaign.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's technical approach to Task Order No. 1 are:

- Offeror's understanding of the scope and complexity of the task requirements;

- Comprehensiveness of the Offeror's proposed process to develop a national communications plan for the integrated communications campaign;
- Process feasibility, appropriateness and relevancy for achieving campaign goals;
- Offeror's adequacy in the allocation of time and resources for the proposed process; and
- Offeror's creativity and innovation in their approach.

M.3.6 – Management & Small Business Subcontracting Approach

This evaluation factor is divided into two elements, as described below. Each element will be evaluated through written proposals and oral presentations. Each element is considered of equal importance in evaluating this factor.

M.3.6.1 – Element 1 – Management Approach

The decennial census is a project that must operate on schedule, with no exceptions. The schedule must be met with an effort involving thousands of Census Bureau and Contractor employees. The Government must therefore have the utmost confidence in the Contractor's management team, abilities, and methods. Through their written proposals and oral presentations, Offerors will be evaluated on their proposed methods for managing the integrated communications campaign requirements.

The emphasis on this element is the overall management approach to ensure full integration among all campaign tactics (such as advertising, public relations, and special events) and among all service providers (prime and sub-contractors) and Census operations.

Some examples of the aspects the Government will consider when evaluating the Offeror's management approach are:

- Offeror's understanding of the complexity of managing the 2010 Census Communications Campaign, with emphasis on the management of several geographically disperse service providers and processes;
- Comprehensiveness and feasibility of the Offeror's proposed Project Management Plan for the 2010 Census Communications Campaign, as defined in Section L.7.2(b).
- Offeror's understanding of the importance of planning for the unexpected, and ability to remain flexible to adjust to swift and critical changes in management requirements.

M.3.6.2 – Element 2 – Small Business Subcontracting Approach

This element will be evaluated based on the Offeror's proposed Small Business Subcontracting Plan and Small Business Participation Plan. Emphasis will be given to the following aspects of the proposed plans:

- The Offeror's proposed small business subcontracting goals in reference to the Government small business subcontracting goal, as defined in Section C;
- The Offeror's strategy to reach their proposed goals; and
- The feasibility of the proposed strategy.

M.4 PRICE EVALUATION

The price evaluation will include price completeness and accuracy, price realism, price reasonableness, price risk, and total price to the Government. All information provided under the Price Proposal, inclusive of the proposed firm-fixed-price for Task Order No. 1, will be used for price evaluation, as defined in M.4.1 through M.4.4 below.

Note: Only Table B.1 will be used for price comparison purposes in the context of Best Value determination. Tables B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5 and the proposed Award Fee Plan will only be used to assess cost realism, reasonableness and risk for future task orders. Tables B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5 and the proposed Award Fee Plan will not be used for price comparison. In addition, Table B.4, Travel Cost for Task Order No. 1 will not be evaluated in the context of best value for award.

M.4.1 Price Completeness and Accuracy

The Government will review the price schedules for completeness and accuracy. A determination will be made as to whether the Offeror has properly understood the price proposal instructions and properly completed the price schedules. Changes to the evaluation quantities, blanks or zeros in the pricing columns, and/or mathematical mistakes are subject to clarification for confirmation of the Offeror's intent. The Offeror's proposals will be checked for mathematical correctness to include the following:

- Checking arithmetic in all B-Table computations;
- Making sure that all prices are summarized correctly; and
- Comparing electronic submittals with hard copies.

A determination will be made regarding whether the price appears unbalanced for the fixed price for Task Order No. 1 (Table B.1) and/or for the basis of the estimate. An analysis will be made to identify any irregular or unusual pricing patterns. An unbalanced proposal is one that incorporates prices that are less for some items and/or prices that are overstated for other items.

M.4.2 Price Realism

The Offeror is placed on notice that any proposals that are unrealistic in terms of technical commitment or unrealistically low in their price proposal will be deemed reflective of an inherent lack of technical competence or indicative of failure to comprehend the complexity and risk of contract requirements, and may be grounds for rejection of the proposal.

M.4.3 Price Reasonableness

The Offeror is expected to establish a reasonable price relationship between all price elements listed in Section B. An evaluation of the Offeror's price proposals will be made to determine if they are realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a clear understanding of the requirements, and are consistent with the technical proposal. Reasonableness determinations will be made by determining if competition exists, by comparing proposed prices with established commercial or GSA price schedules, by evaluating fees, and/or by comparing proposed prices with the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE).

M.4.4 Price Risk

Price risk refers to any aspect of the Offeror's proposals that could have significant negative price consequences for the Government. Proposals will be assessed to identify potential price risk. Where price risk is assessed, it may be described in quantitative terms or used as a best-value discriminator.

M.5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Proposals shall be prepared in accordance with the instructions in Section L. If a proposal is not prepared in accordance with Section L, it will be "Non-Responsive."

Trade-offs and risks should be clear throughout the proposal, and mitigation strategies presented proactively.

M.6 EVALUATION SUPPORT

The Offeror is advised that the Government may utilize outside Contractors and/or Consultants to assist in the evaluation of proposals. These outside Contractors will have access to any and all information contained in the Offeror's proposals, and will be subject to appropriate conflict of interest, standards of conduct, and confidentiality restrictions.

[End of Section M]